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Museum and University Data, Program and Information Exchange

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LIBRARIES

TWO-DAY CRAM COURSE IN TIME-SHARE COMPUTING

In response to many requests (two, at last counting) a two-day cram course in the use and programming of a time-share computer will be offered at the Smithsonian Institution on June 16-17. Current interest has come primarily from other museums that are planning or hoping to install machines soon, and wish to have someone on the staff familiar with the basic techniques. The two days will, therefore, be oriented in the direction of taking care of their needs, but anyone who wishes to take advantage of the opportunity to familiarize himself with time-share computers is welcome to attend. It is anticipated that the individuals participating as students will be totally unfamiliar with any kind of computer operation or programming, so the work will begin at absolute ground zero. Experts on programming or time-shared computer use need not apply! The work will be completely informal, and we will progress at the rate set by the students. Since this course is being offered solely as a consequence of student demand, we think we can assure all participants that there is little danger of sit-ins, strikes, fire bombs or armed guards (college presidents please take notice).

The course will be under the direction of James A. Peters. While it will not be necessary to enroll or register, anyone who would like to attend should let him know ahead of time, if possible, at the Division of Reptiles and Amphibians, Museum of Natural History, United States National Museum, Washington, D. C. 20560, telephone [202] 381-6171. If it is impossible to notify ahead of time, feel free to come anyway.

FIRST MUDPIE CONFERENCE, SECOND NOTICE

Plans for the first MUDPIE conference, to be held at the American Museum of Natural History on June 14 (i.e., on the Saturday before the beginning of the course mentioned above, on Monday) are beginning to shape up. The AMNH program for public information services, called "QUERY," will probably be functional and on display. The "Genera of Reptiles" project at the AMNH will have a DATATEXT plus CALL 360 (IBM) terminal available, to show what they can do with stored information on the herpetological literature, as well as representatives from Xerox and 3M companies to show available equipment. Time-share contractors are expected to bring in portable teletypes to show what they can do.

The afternoon sessions will be devoted to informal discussions of the various ways in which museums and universities are beginning to utilize time-share computers, including storage and retrieval of taxonomic data, computerized keys, composition of textual material, and statistical processing. We hope that people with experience will attend to discuss their mutual problems, as well as neophytes who will be given an opportunity to learn about the techniques and methods of those individuals already active. Some time will be devoted to the possibilities of a common network among museums to provide mutual access to the storage of both directly useful scientific information and public directed question and answer facilities. It is hoped that the Executive Director of the "Museum Computer Network" will be present to give us some information on their activities (this group is composed primarily of Art Museum people). Any other ideas, possible subjects, questions, or other points worthy of discussion should be communicated to James A. Peters at the address above, since he is acting as coordinator of the program.

Smithsonian Institution
May 6, 1969